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Economic and Social Council

Provisional

9 June 2009

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Organizational session of 2009

Provisional summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 26 March 2009, at 11.30 a.m.

President: Ms. Lucas ..... (Luxembourg)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*) (E/2009/11 and E/2009/49; E/2009/L.2-L.4)

Draft decision entitled: "Theme for the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2009 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council" (E/2009/L.2)

1. **The President** recalled that the draft decision had been submitted by Ms. Intelmann (Estonia), Vice-President of the Council, on the basis of informal consultations. Speaking on behalf of Ms. Intelmann, she said it was the common understanding that the "guiding principles" referred to in the draft decision were the broader set of principles for humanitarian assistance contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182 and other relevant General Assembly and Council resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Council.

2. *Draft decision E/2009/L.2 was adopted.*

Draft decision entitled: "Theme for the item on regional cooperation of the 2009 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council" (E/2009/L.3)

3. *Draft decision E/2009/L.3 was adopted.*

Draft decision entitled: "Economic and Social Council event to discuss transition from relief to development" (E/2009/L.4)

4. *Draft decision E/2009/L.4 was adopted.*

Theme for the 2010 thematic discussion of the Economic and Social Council

5. **The President** requested delegations to conclude informal consultations as quickly as possible so that a proposal could be presented to the Council for action at its next meeting.

6. **Mr. Zainal Abidin** (Malaysia) said that a proposal had recently been made by a number of delegations with a view to the inclusion of a specific reference to the challenges faced by countries around the world. The draft proposal had therefore been revised to read "Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on gender equality and empowerment of women". The addition should not pose a problem, but more time was needed in order to circulate the revised proposal in electronic form so that it could be adopted at the Council's next meeting.

7. **The President** said she took it that the Council wished to proceed accordingly.

8. *It was so decided.*

Preparations for the operational activities segment of the 2009 substantive session of the Council

9. **Ms. Gallardo Hernández** (El Salvador), Vice-President, said that the operational activities segment of the Council's substantive session had become increasingly important as it allowed the Council to play a pivotal role in the operational activities of the United Nations system. The 2009 segment, which would take place from 15 to 17 July 2009, would focus on the way in which the United Nations system had implemented or planned to implement the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development (A/RES/62/208).

Proposal for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the provisional agenda of the 2009 substantive session (E/2009/11)

10. **The President** drew attention to a request made by Iraq (E/2009/11), in accordance with rule 12 of the Council's rules of procedure, for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the provisional agenda of the Council's 2009 substantive session.

11. **Mr. Al-Musawi** (Iraq) said that as the largest wetland ecosystem in the Middle East and western Eurasia, the marshes in southern Iraq were of unique ecological importance to migratory birds and freshwater fish, including a number of endangered species. The marshes were also crucial to the economic well-being and cultural heritage of the people who had lived there for thousands of years. The pressures of development and most recently, systematic drainage by the previous regime had destroyed 90 per cent of those marshlands. Their role as a transboundary water resource, as well as the petroleum reserves they contained, made their rehabilitation a priority for Iraq's reconstruction agenda.

12. The establishment by the Ministry of Water Resources of a Centre for the Restoration of the Iraqi Marshlands was the first step towards a rehabilitation project that would be based on the principles of preservation of the ecological and cultural heritage,

sustainable development, capacity-building in environmentally sound technologies and integration of marshland rehabilitation into a comprehensive national water policy. His country would welcome international cooperation in that effort. He therefore requested that a new sub-item entitled "Rehabilitation of the marshes in the southern regions of Iraq" under agenda item 13 (a) ("Economic and environmental questions: sustainable development") should be included in the agenda of the 2009 substantive session of the Council.

13. **The President** said that the Council would revert to the matter at a later date.

Request by Peru to join the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/2009/49)

14. **The President** drew attention to a letter dated 20 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations (E/2009/49).

15. **Mr. Chávez** (Peru) said that his Government's request to join the Ad Hoc Advisory Group was based on a long history of support for Haiti. Peru had been a troop contributor to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for nearly five years; as a member of the Security Council, it had proposed the renewal of the mandate of MINUSTAH and chaired the Group of Friends of Haiti. It was important, including in the context of the triennial comprehensive policy review, to continue to provide such support.

16. **Mr. Morrill** (Canada) said that he welcomed Peru's interest in joining the Ad Hoc Advisory Group and looked forward to working with the Peruvian delegation towards the long-term development of Haiti.

17. **The President** said that in light of the mission of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group planned for early May 2009, a decision on Peru's request would need to be taken prior to the scheduled date of the mission. The Council would revert to the matter in due course.

Elections, nominations, confirmations and appointments (*continued*)

Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

18. **The President** said that the Group of Western European and other States had endorsed France, Norway and Spain to fill three of their Group's vacant seats on the Governing Council. She took it that the Council wished to elect France, Norway and Spain to the Governing Council for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2012.

19. *It was so decided.*

20. **The President** said that, having received no other candidatures, she took it that the Council wished to further postpone the election of the following members to the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme: two members from the Group of Western European and other States for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2011; and one member from the Group of African States, the Group of Asian States and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively, as well as two members from the Group of Western European and other States for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2012.

21. *It was so decided.*

Organization of work

22. **Mr. Seth** (Director, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introduced the "Development strategies that work" database, which was available on the Council's website (http://webapps01.un.org/nvp/frontend.action). The database was a growing collection of policies, outcomes and analysis based on information provided by Governments in their national reports and voluntary presentations prepared for annual ministerial reviews dating back to 2007, when the first such presentations had been made. The database, which was designed as a tool for policymakers, practitioners and researchers, highlighted successful strategic policies; challenges and lessons learned in implementing such policies; and projects that could be replicated in different countries. However, it included only the information provided by Council members, which was further limited by reporting restrictions. He encouraged members to provide updated content for his Office to post to the website and welcomed any suggestions for the latter's improvement. A feature allowing the hosting of e-discussions and e-forums on the website was planned, and he hoped that professional moderators would be made available so as to ensure the high quality of the forum discussions.

23. Furthermore, an e-discussion on global public health had recently been held as part of the preparatory process for the 2009 Annual Ministerial Review. Some

126 representatives of 5,500 subscribed participants, including experts, practitioners and policymakers had contributed to the very lively discussion. The key messages that had emerged included the need to promote global health as a priority in the overall development agenda; the need for a holistic set of incentives to limit damage associated with the migration of health-care workers; and the need for control of non-communicable diseases. It was regrettable that no Council members had participated; he encouraged delegations to encourage their governments' potential interest in such discussions.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.